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Instrumental Music Department

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OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE IN THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE ON INSTRUMENTAL AFFAIRS

The National Music Supervisors' Conference bears a striking analogy to the federal government of our country. Delegates from the various states and communities come together at regular intervals for the transaction of business which transcends local interests, and for the consideration of problems of national importance. The National Conference, however, is at once democratic and representative. Smaller sections of the vast area of the United States with special interests and a homogeneity of problems have organized themselves into state federations and sectional conferences, and from these as accredited delegates, as well as directly from the communities served by them, come supervisors to the National Conference. As we find in the federal government special bodies, both advisory and executive, so the Conference has their parallels in the Board of Directors, the Educational Council, and the state chairmen.

Where the field delimited for the operation of a given organization has grown too large in extent or too complex in constitution, there is always manifest a tendency to differentiate and to specialize. This accounts for



JAY W. FAY
Chairman Instrumental Committee

the formation of the Eastern and the Southern Conferences in turn, and for the probability of a Western soon to be organized. The existence of these sections does not imply any lack of loyalty to the National body, but is merely an inevitable consequence of remoteness on the one hand and of community of interest on the other. The National Conference has a parental obligation toward these sections,

and will do well to exercise a spirit of tolerance and helpfulness, with due caution to avoid useless duplication of effort. The ultimate result of this organization will be greater efficiency with no loss of unity.

In like manner, in the vast field of public school music so ably served by the Educational Council there has developed in the last few years a special field of increasing importance with problems and interests so distinct that it has been deemed advisable to appoint a special committee to investigate that field, and thereby relieve the Educational Council of a phase of its ever-widening activity and enable it to do still more thorough and effective work than ever before. The existence of this committee again is no indication of a lack of confidence in the

that he will present in the columns of this department a survey of the significant work he has accomplished. B. F. Stuber, of Akron, Ohio, has come into prominence with a series of books for the violin and other instruments, based on sound pedagogical principles and developed in an ingenious and able manner. He has brought violin class teaching to a high level in Akron, and has one of the greatest experimental fields in the country. The Chairman of the committee is in charge of instrumental work in Rochester, N. Y., where by the generosity of George Eastman over four hundred band and orchestra instruments have been placed at the disposal of the Board of Education, insuring a large number of fully equipped and well-balanced units and permitting experiment and organization on a large scale.

Your committee should be like a group of physicians, each of whom brings to a consultation ample study and preparation, supplemented by extensive experience in his own field.

The committee is planning a survey of instrumental instruction in the schools of the United States. As the first step in this survey, it has begun a census of teachers in this special field. A card was inserted in the JOURNAL calling for names and addresses, and up to date about thirty replies have been received. I estimate that there are more than one thousand teachers in the country teaching violin, piano or orchestral instruments in

the public schools, directing bands or orchestras or supervising instrumental instruction, so that it is obvious that some other source of information must be tapped to get a representative list of supervisors. Machinery has already been set in motion to accomplish this. At the same time, another card will be inserted in this copy of the JOURNAL, and your coöperation is solicited. Sit down and fill out this at once, and make it easy for your committee to do some efficient and aggressive work in the interest of competent, well-advised and widespread instruction in the use of band and orchestral instruments and in the formation of organizations that can render the greatest possible service to their own members, their schools and the community.

May I ask that any supervisor or teacher who has ideas on this subject, or has encountered difficulties on his path, will write to the Chairman or any member of the committee and suggest lines of activity along which your committee can make itself useful. And in closing, may I quote a sentence from our President's "Introduction to School Music Teaching," a phrase that has burned itself into my memory and strengthened my own convictions on the subject:

"Instruction in instrumental music is to be in the near future one of the most important contributions made by the school to the musical life of the nation."

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